

CHAPTER III.

GREEN BUILDING REGULATIONS

Sections:

Section C3-50	Purpose
Section C3-51	Definitions
Section C3-52	Applicability
Section C3-53	Standards for Compliance
Section C3-54	Administrative Procedures
Section C3-55	Appeal
Section C3-56	Interaction with other regulations

Section C3-50 Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter is to enhance public health and welfare and assure that green building principles and practices are incorporated into new development to limit impacts to the natural and human environment within unincorporated Santa Clara County. The green building provisions referenced in this chapter are designed to achieve the following goals:

- (a) Increase energy efficiency in buildings
- (b) Encourage water and natural resource conservation;
- (c) Reduce waste generated by construction projects;
- (d) Provide durable buildings that are efficient, cost effective, and economical to own and operate; and
- (e) Promote the health and productivity of residents and workers which occupy and live in buildings within the County.

Section C3-51 Definitions

The following definitions shall apply to this chapter:

- (a) “Addition” means new construction square footage added to an existing structure.
- (b) “Applicant” means any person or entity applying to the County for a building permit to undertake any Covered Project within the County.
- (c) “Compliance Official” means the Building Official as defined in Section C1-4 of the Santa Clara County Ordinance Code or his or her designee.
- (d) “Compliance threshold” means the minimum number of points or rating level of a green building rating system that must be attained for a particular Covered Project, as set forth in the Standards for Compliance in Section C3-53.
- (e) “Covered Project” means any building permit application for new construction or renovations subject to Standards for Compliance as set forth in Section C3-53.
- (f) “Green Building” means a whole systems approach to the design, construction, and operation of buildings that substantially mitigates the environmental impacts of buildings. Green building practices recognize the relationship between the natural and built environments and seek to minimize the use of energy, water and other natural resources and provide a healthy, productive indoor environment.

- (g) “Green Building Certification” means verification to meet the certification requirements of Build it Green or LEED.
- (h) “Green Building Compliance” means written documentation by a Qualified Green Building Professional demonstrating that a Covered Project will meet the Green Building Standards for Compliance listed under Section C3-53.
- (i) “Green Building Project Checklist” means a checklist or score developed for the purpose of calculating a green building rating.
- (j) “Green Building Rating System” means the rating system associated with specific green building criteria and used to determine compliance thresholds, as set forth in Green Building Standards for Compliance under Section C3-53. Examples of rating systems include, but are not limited to, the LEED and Green Point Rated systems.
- (k) “GreenPoint Rated” means a residential green building rating system developed by the Build it Green organization.
- (l) “GreenPoint Verification” means verification of compliance by a certified GreenPoint Rater, resulting in green building certification by Build it Green including green points allocation across all of the resource categories.
- (m) “LEED” means the “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design” green building rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.
- (n) “LEED Certification” means verification to meet the standard of Certified or better by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), and resulting in LEED certification of the project by the USGBC.
- (o) “Major Remodel” means any remodel that exceeds the permit valuation thresholds established within the Standards for Compliance in Section C3-53.
- (p) “Minor Remodel” means any remodel for which the permit valuation of the construction is less than the value established for a “Major Remodel” per the Standards for Compliance in Section C3-53.
- (q) “New Residences” means the construction of a new single family dwelling.
- (r) “Qualified Green Building Professional” means a person trained through the USGBC as a LEED Accredited Professional or through Build it Green as a Certified Green Point Rater, or a person with similar qualifications if acceptable to the Compliance Official.
- (s) “Rebuild” means any alteration or modification to an existing building that is not a “Remodel” as defined under Ordinance Code Section C1-10.1 and thus is considered a new building.
- (t) “Remodel” means any alteration or modification to an existing building that is a “Remodel” as defined under Ordinance Code Section C1-10.1.
- (u) “Self Verify” means verification submitted by an Applicant that a Covered Project will meet the Standards for Compliance under Section C3-53.
- (v) “Square footage” for the purposes of calculating additional or new construction square footage means the sum of the gross horizontal areas of the several floors of a building, as measured from the rough exterior walls, or (if applicable) from the centerline of the common wall between two attached buildings. Square footage also includes the total area of any attached garage, carport, porch or similar attached structure or feature that is both (a) covered, and (b) greater than 50% enclosed by perimeter walls. It includes the horizontal area of an interior stairway at each of the two or more stories to which the stairway provides access. An attic space that has a minimum clearance of seven (7) feet in each of the three (3) dimensions for at least 70 contiguous square feet shall be included. Where the vertical distance between any floor and the ceiling above exceeds 15 feet, floor area shall be counted twice.

Section C3-52 Applicability

Upon the effective date of this chapter, all Covered Projects shall submit to the Compliance Official a completed Green Building Project Checklist but no points or certification shall be required to be achieved until January 1, 2010 or whenever the cost-effectiveness determination for this Ordinance is approved by the California Energy Commission, whichever comes later.

Effective January 1, 2010, or whenever the cost-effectiveness determination for this Ordinance is approved by the California Energy Commission (whichever comes later), all Covered Projects shall be required to meet the requirements set forth in Table I of Section C3-53, except that no point requirements or certification shall apply to any project for which a building permit application is submitted prior to January 1, 2010.

All Covered Projects shall also meet or exceed the energy requirements contained in the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6) of the California Building Code.

Section C3-53 Standards for Compliance

Table I

**County of Santa Clara
Green Building Standards for Compliance for Private Development
Single Family Residential Construction**

Type of Project	Checklist Required	Minimum Requirements or Standard	Verification
Remodels & Additions			
Minor Remodel and Addition < 500 square feet ⁸	No Requirement (<i>Handouts and Checklists Provided</i>)		
Major Remodel ¹ and Addition \geq 500 square feet ⁷	Green Point Rated Existing Home Checklist ²	Submit Checklist	Self Verify
New Residences & Rebuilds			
New Residence and Rebuild \leq 1,200 square feet	No Requirements (<i>Handouts and Checklists Provided</i>)		
New Residence and Rebuild 1,201 \leq 3,000 square feet	Single Family GreenPoint Checklist ³ or LEED for Homes Checklist ⁴	50 points ⁶ or LEED Certification	Green Point Verification or LEED Certification

New Residence and Rebuild >3,000 square feet	Single Family Green Point Checklist ³ or LEED for Homes Checklist ⁴	50 points ⁶ + 1 point per additional 100 square feet beyond 3,000 square feet ⁵ or LEED Certification	Green Point Verification or LEED Certification
---	---	---	--

¹ Major Remodel entails renovations of >\$100,000 permit valuation.

² Green Point Rated Existing Home Checklist v1.0

³ Single Family Green Point Checklist 2007 Edition (March 2007)

⁴ LEED® for Homes Project Checklist (January 2008)

⁵ For purposes of determining points required, square footage shall be rounded to the nearest whole number (in 100's), for example 149 shall be rounded down to 100 and 150 shall be rounded up to 200.

⁶ Points shall include Green Point Rated minimum points across all resource categories.

⁷ Requirements do not apply to Residences where the resulting square footage is 1,200 square feet or less in size.

⁸ Additions that result in the cumulative addition of over 500 square feet within a twenty four (24) month period (application date to application date) shall not be included within this classification.

Section C3-54 Administrative Procedures

In addition to the procedures in this section, a Covered Project shall meet or exceed the energy requirements contained in the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards, including California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Parts 1 and 6.

(a) The procedures for compliance may include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) Building Plan Check Review. Any submittal of an application for a building permit for any Covered Project shall include a Green Building Project Checklist. This checklist shall be incorporated onto a separate plan sheet included with the building plans. A Qualified Green Building Professional shall provide evidence of adequate Green Building Compliance to the Compliance Official to satisfy the requirements of the Standards of Compliance set forth in Section C3-53, prior to issuance of a building permit.

(2) Final Building Inspection, Verification, and Occupancy. Prior to final building inspection and occupancy for any Covered Project, a Qualified Green Building Professional shall provide evidence of Green Building Certification, to the Compliance Official to satisfy the requirements of the Standards of Compliance set forth in Section C3-53.

(3) Final Determination of Compliance. Prior to final building inspection for a Covered Project, the Compliance Official shall review the documentation submitted by the Applicant and determine whether the Applicant has achieved the required compliance as set forth in the Standards for Compliance under Section C3-53. If the Compliance Official determines that the Applicant has met the requirements of Section C3-53, the final building inspection may proceed, provided the Covered Project has received all

other required applicable approvals. If the Compliance Official determines that the Covered Project has not met the requirements of Section C3-53, the Compliance Official shall find one of the following:

- i. Substantial Compliance. An Applicant may submit evidence showing that the Applicant is unable to immediately meet all of the requirements of Section C3-53 but will meet all necessary requirements within a six-month period. Upon this submission (and provided all other applicable requirements have been met) the Compliance Official may issue a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy for a six-month period within which the Applicant must meet all of the requirements of Section C3-53. Circumstances under which a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy may be issued include, but are not limited to: installation of, or compliance with all Green Building measures as required under Section C3-53 but Green Building Certification has not occurred or been processed, and the unavailability of Green Building materials. An additional six month extension may be granted at the discretion of the Compliance Official. The total extension term shall not exceed one year. If the Applicant meets the requirements of Section C3-53 within this extension period (as determined by the Compliance Official), final building inspection may proceed. If the Applicant does not meet the requirements of Section C3-53 after the total one-year extension period has run out, the Compliance Official may revoke the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy and the project shall be classified as a Non-Compliance Project.
- ii. Non-Compliance Project. If the Compliance Official determines that the Covered Project does not meet the requirements of Section C3-53 and is not in Substantial Compliance (as specified above), the Covered Project shall be determined to be a Non-Compliance project, and the final inspection for this project shall not occur until the project is brought into full compliance with Section C3-53 (provided all other applicable requirements have been met).

(4) Lack of Inspectors. If the Compliance Official determines that there is a lack of Qualified Green Building Professionals available to perform green building inspections and / or certifications within a timely manner, the Compliance Official may, at his or her discretion, allow inspections and/or certifications by qualified employees of the County of Santa Clara, or Self Verification by the Applicant that the project is in Compliance with Section C3-53.

- (b) The Director of Planning and Development shall promulgate any rules and regulations necessary or appropriate to achieve compliance with the requirements of this Chapter. The rules and regulations shall provide, at minimum, for the incorporation of green building requirements of this Chapter into checklist submittals with building permit applications, and supporting documents demonstrate compliance with this Chapter.
- (c) In addition to the procedures in this section, a Covered Project shall also meet or exceed the energy requirements contained in the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6) of the California Building Code.

Section C3-55 Appeal

No applicant may appeal any provision required to comply with the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards, including California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Parts 1 and 6.

- (a) Any Applicant or person may appeal the determination of the Compliance Officer regarding compliance with any provision of this ordinance to the Director of Planning and Development. Any such appeal must be filed within 15 days of the decision by the Compliance Officer and shall be accompanied by a payment of a fee in an amount established by resolution by the Board of Supervisors.
- (b) An Applicant may appeal the determination made pursuant to subsection (a) to the Board of Supervisors. Any such appeal must be filed within 15 days of the decision and be accompanied by a payment of a fee in an amount established by resolution by the Board of Supervisors.
- (c) Any appeal related to any provision required to comply with the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6) of the California Building Code shall be limited to whether the provision applies to the project, but the appeal process shall not be used to exempt any project from compliance with applicable California Building Energy Efficiency Standards.

Section C3-56 Interaction with other regulations

This ordinance is not intended to apply where its application shall result in its preemption by federal or state laws or rules, including but not limited to conservation standards applicable to appliances and equipment, including heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (“HVAC”) products and water heaters.

There are many other laws, regulations, and ordinances that apply to building design construction and maintenance and to development. The provisions of this Ordinance are intended to be in addition to and not in conflict with these other laws, regulations, and ordinances. If any provision of this Ordinance conflicts with any duly adopted and valid statutes or regulations of the federal government or the State of California, the federal or state statutes or regulations shall take precedence.